

## **I Don't Want Your Cooties**

I.

Recess is always the same thing. Every day the girls get together on the basketball court to play four square or UNICORN (our version of PIG because unicorns are cooler) until *he* ruins it. His name is Cody Pope. But around these parts, we call him Kissing Cody Pope.

My mom says that Cody is just girl crazy, or being a copy cat and doing what the guys on TV do. But girls really don't like to be kissed. He should know that. Everyone in the first grade knows that boys have cooties and girls don't want them. And the only way to get cooties is by being kissed.

But Cody Pope wants to kiss all the girls anyway. Today wasn't any different. Cody came charging up the hill to the basketball court and we all fled, and like always he chased after me.

"Sarah, I love you!"

"Sarah, I'm going to kiss you!"

"Saaaaraaaah!!!"

Why does Kissing Cody Pope always have to come after me?

I run faster than I've ever ran before. Usually if I can make it to the jungle gym and climb under it, the other kids will hide me. My feet run across the hard pavement and suddenly land in the soft grass that is wet and sticking to my jeans. I hate having wet jeans. Then I hit the rocks. I slide through one of the holes of the jungle gym and clamber to my feet. My hands are covered in a dust and reddish mud and I wipe them on my jeans so the tops now match the bottoms where grass and mud have collected. I look up and realize there are no kids there, the playground must have been too wet and they're all running around up on the pavement.

“Oh Saraaaah, I see you!” I hear Cody’s voice from behind me.

I try to get out but his hand is on my shoulder.

I spin around and Cody stares at me. “Kiss me my darling,” he says with a big smile on his face. Then he sticks his lips out in a circle so I can see his two front teeth and leans forward. I watch as he pushes his tongue through his lips as if he is going to stick that thing in my mouth.

I remembered what my mom said about how he learned all this stuff by watching TV. Well in this one show I was watching last week, this girl didn’t like what a guy was doing so she put her hands on his shoulder and raised her knee real hard and hit him. I look around to see if anyone is watching and then stick my hands on his shoulders. He inches slightly closer to me as I take one last look around, his chicken nugget breath hitting my face, then quick like lightning I raise my knee and BAM! He’s on the ground in tears, and I’m running like mad, through the dirty rocks, up the slippery grass, until my socks are streaked with green and my feet are leaving marks all over the cement of the basketball court.

Cody will never try to kiss *me* again.

II.

I hate Kissing Cody. My mom says that hate is a strong word, so I guess I really just dislike Kissing Cody. But what I really do hate is that my mom told his grandma I would go play with him after school today. Doesn’t she *know* we call him KISSING Cody Pope for a reason? I’m seven and daddy says that’s too young to be kissed, but mom made me go play at his house anyway. If I get kissed it’s her fault.

I guess it started okay at Cody’s house. We watched Lady and the Tramp which is my favorite movie and he didn’t make fun of me when I danced with the Siamese cats. Most of my friends tease me that I know all the words and dance a long. But it’s my favorite part, what am I supposed to do? Sit quietly? I don’t think so! And Cody understood that and so I thought he could be my friend.

Cody then took me outside and showed me his Frisbees and all of his soccer balls and baseballs. We accidentally kicked the soccer ball into the dog house and his giant dog wouldn't give it back. Instead she would bark whenever we got near and snap her teeth at us. So we went to the Frisbees. But that landed on the roof and his grandma was watching the baby, so she couldn't get it down. We had no choice but to head back to his room where he was going to make me watch Power Rangers. I hate the Power Rangers. They're lame. But he got a Strawberry Fruit by the Foot and that made it all better.

Cody thought it would be funny if we ate it together like they do in Lady and the Tramp. So I got the good end (you know the thick end that doubles over) and he got the bad end and he promised not to kiss me but then he got real close because he was eating too fast and started eating my half! Then his lips got really close to mine and I could feel him breathing on my face and I knew he was going to try to trick me into a kiss.

So I punched him.

I threw my arm straight out and I hit him right in the nose. Hard. Just like Mom told me to do if someone ever tries to take me. I should hit them and punch them and aim for the eyes. But I missed the eyes and hit his nose instead. By the time my Mom got there to get me it was bleeding a lot and Cody wouldn't stop crying. I lied and told him I was sorry over and over again, but that didn't make it better.

My mom told me that even if I didn't want him to kiss me, I probably shouldn't have hit him and now I have to write this stupid apology not. Apparently, "sorry you tried to kiss me" doesn't count. So here's what I'll say: "Dear Cody, I'm sorry you tried to kiss me and I punched you. I hope your nose gets better. – Sarah. PS If you ever try to kiss me again, I'll tell everyone you got beat up by a girl."